

COMO ENERGY CHALLENGE

Your source of information about the CoMo Energy Challenge
& the Georgetown University Energy Prize

*Press Kit 2014-
2015*



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Synopsis:

The CoMo Energy Challenge is Columbia, MO's campaign for the Georgetown University Energy Prize (GUEP). The GUEP is a 2 year, nationwide competition among 50 communities to see who can reduce the most [residential and municipal] energy and do so in an "innovative and replicable" way. The Prize is \$5 million dollars awarded to the most successful community, to be put towards further community energy efficiency measures.

The Georgetown University Energy Prize is challenging small- to medium-size communities to rethink their energy use, and implement creative strategies to increase efficiency. Currently, we are part of a select group of communities are leading the way by bringing together local governments, residents, and utilities, to demonstrate success in reducing energy consumption over a two-year period.

Our goal during the 2 year competition (January 2015 – December 2016) is to educate, excite, and engage members of the community to make lasting change, and ultimately increase Columbia residents' quality of life. We know no one likes to make their monthly utility payment, and for some the cost can be a burden. Making energy efficient retrofits, or improvements, to your home can save you money for years to come. Changing behaviors can have a lasting effect. We are encouraging lasting change and an open conversation about energy.

Tagline

Competing for \$5 million and *change*.

Contacts

The CoMo Energy Challenge is based out of the City of Columbia's Office of Sustainability, with support from many community partners including: Columbia Public Schools, University of Missouri, CMCA, CFCM, Columbia Water and Light, Ameren, Boone Electric Cooperative, and several community service organizations.

Local

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Twitter: www.twitter.com/comochallenge @CoMoChallenge

National

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Website: www.guep.org

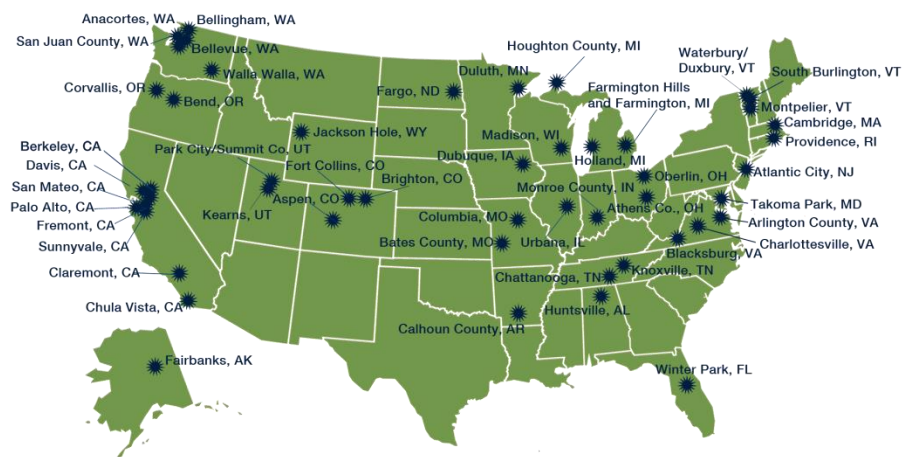
Facebook: www.facebook.com/guenergyprize

Twitter: www.twitter.com/guenergyprize @GUEnergyPrize

FAQ's

1. Who is Columbia competing against in the Georgetown University Energy Prize?

Columbia is one of 50 semifinalist communities in the GUEP. See [this map](#) for additional info.



2. Why did Georgetown create a nationwide energy efficiency competition?

(Answer from www.guep.org/faqs) Throughout history, highly visible prize competitions have demonstrated their capacity to spur innovative approaches to some of the most difficult challenges faced by mankind. Despite the many innovative efficiency measures now in place across the country – including incentives and tax breaks – the United States still wastes more than half of all energy produced. It's clear that we need a new approach to address this challenge, and the Georgetown University Energy Prize is positioned to act as the catalyst for the long-term, positive change we need.

3. What will Columbia do with the Prize money, should we win the competition?

The \$5 million Prize purse must go towards community energy efficiency projects, measures, and/or initiatives. So far, preliminary ideas for the Prize are to create a revolving loan fund for neighborhoods to make energy efficient retrofits, a community solar project, and LED streetlights. We are asking members of the community to tell us their ideas for spending the \$5 million, if we win [here](#).

4. How is Columbia measuring energy use?

For this competition, we are measuring all residential accounts within the City of Columbia, both electric and natural gas, as well as all municipal accounts. Municipal accounts include City buildings and Columbia Public School buildings. All information will be given to Georgetown in aggregate, and divided by number of accounts, to reach the amount of energy consumed per capita. Energy use data will be weather normalized to even the playing field for all competing communities.

5. What are you asking residents of Columbia to do to help Columbia win?

There are many things residents can do to reduce their energy use, and help us win. There are also many resources available in the community to help them. Utilities offer rebates and sometimes financing options to help customers make energy efficiency upgrades, or retrofits, to their homes. CMCA offers this service, as well as a weatherization program, to income qualifying residents to help make their homes more efficient and affordable to run.

For homeowners, the best starting point is to get a home energy audit. The audit will tell them how their home uses energy, where it's wasting or leaking energy, and how to fix it (energy efficient retrofits) which will save them money. There are many area contractors who perform home energy audits. Even better, if they go through their local utility to get an energy audit, they could be eligible for rebates and financing to help them make the upgrades recommended in the energy audit. Both electric utilities that serve the Columbia area have the Home Performance with Energy Star program, which offers rebates/financing for audits and energy efficient retrofits.

Besides making physical upgrades to one's home, there are behavioral changes that can be made to save energy. This is especially applicable to renters, or homeowners who have already made energy efficient retrofits. Things like changing out lightbulbs to new LED bulbs will show an immediate savings, unplugging electronics or appliances when they are not in use, using a ceiling fan to feel cooler instead of turning the air on, etc. Find more tips [here](#).

6. What is the timeline for the competition?

We will be measuring energy use for 2 full years; all of 2015 and all of 2016. A winner will be announced by Georgetown University in mid-2017. See timeline below.



7. Are there any rewards for finalist communities that aren't selected as the Prize winner?

(Answer from www.guep.org/faqs) A community doesn't have to finish first in the competition to "win". Every competing community that demonstrates savings over previous years will be able to pass through a significant savings to their residents via energy bills for individual households—giving residents more disposable income, and allowing local governments to provide more money for direct services to residents. Moreover, the long-term benefits of energy efficiency include both financial and environmental benefits for future generations.

While only one community will win the \$5 million prize purse, the Georgetown University Energy Prize will recognize additional noteworthy communities for their achievements in energy efficiency and innovative approaches to addressing this challenge. If additional funding is available, we [GUEP] will award monetary prizes to second and third place communities to help them continue their energy efficiency efforts.

Resources for residents

- www.gocolumbiamo.com/comoenergy/resources/
- [Columbia Water & Light Energy Efficiency Programs](#)
- [Boone Electric Cooperative Energy Efficiency Programs](#)
- [Ameren Natural Gas Energy Efficiency Programs](#)
- [Renters Guide to Energy Efficiency](#)
- [How to find an energy efficient rental in Columbia](#)
- [CMCA Weatherization Program](#)

Grants Received

The Office of Sustainability received 2 grants for the coordination of the CoMo Energy Challenge. A grant from Partners for Places was matched by a Community Foundation of Central Missouri Fund, the Fair Enough Fund. See October 2014 press release below:

COLUMBIA, MO (October 15, 2014) -

The city's Office of Sustainability is excited to announce that Columbia has received a grant from Partners for Places -- a project of the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities -- to engage the community in a one-of-a-kind competition, the CoMo Energy Challenge. Columbia was one of 10 communities in North America awarded the grant.

In addition, the Community Foundation of Central Missouri committed a two-year grant totaling \$67,000 from one of its component funds, the Fair Enough Fund. The grant is a 1:1 match for the grant awarded by Partners for Places.

"The Community Foundation of Central Missouri is proud to be a partner with the City of Columbia rallying citizens together through the CoMo Energy Challenge to encourage local energy efficiency," says John Baker, Community Foundation executive director.

Partners for Places invests in projects that promote a healthy environment, a strong economy and well-being of all residents, and the Community Foundation of Central Missouri has several areas of focus, one of them being environmental sustainability and public spaces. The CoMo Energy Challenge will lead the way in energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption in Columbia households, improving quality of life for all residents.

The CoMo Energy Challenge will be the city's primary effort in competing for the Georgetown University Energy Prize. The Georgetown University Energy Prize (GUEP) challenges US communities to work together and create partnerships to develop and implement innovative approaches to energy efficiency while engaging and educating the community on energy issues.

"We are competing for \$5 million dollars and change," says Columbia Sustainability Manager Barbara Buffaloe. Georgetown University will award the winning community \$5 million dollars. "Regardless of which community wins, we all win by saving money on utility bills and being more comfortable at home."

History of the Office of Sustainability

The Office of Sustainability (OS) was implemented in FY 2010 to further implement [Resolution 160-06 A](#) endorsing the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. The City of Columbia strives to meet or exceed Kyoto Protocol targets for reducing global warming pollution by taking actions in our own operations and community.

In the News

Previously written news articles can be found on our [website](#).

Videos

[Video Introduction of the Georgetown University Energy Prize/CoMo Energy Challenge](#)

[Resolve to save energy in 2015](#)

[Hashtag Video w/ MU Students](#)